

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00558 142135Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----142139Z 078574 /75-62

O 141905Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5961
AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAPE TOWN 0558

EXDIS

3.9. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, XA
SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER ON OWEN MISSION

REF: (A) STATE 080424; (B) STATE 080423

1. I MET WITH PM VORSTER THIS AFTERNOON TO CONVEY THE
POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL (A) IN SUPPORT OF THE OWEN
MISSION. FONMIN BOTHA WAS PRESENT.

2. VORSTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION. HE RECOGNIZED
THAT US DECISION TO INVOLVE ITSELF SO DIRECTLY IS
IMPORTANT NEW ELEMENT. HE WAS HIGH IN HIS PRAISE FOR
FONSEC OWEN SAYING HE IS THE FIRST ENGLISHMAN HE HAS
RUN ACROSS IN A LONG, LONG TIME WHOM HE FELT HE
COULD COMMUNICATE WITH CANDOR AND COMPREHENSION. VORSTER
SAID THAT DESPITE THESE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATIONS, HE WAS
STILL SKEPTICAL ABOUT OUTLOOK. HE COULD GIVE IT
NO BETTER THAN AN AMBER LIGHT. BIG DEFICIENCY IS
LACK OF RESOLVE. HE SAID ASSUMING ALL FACTORS COMBINE
TO MAKE POSSIBLE DRAFTING OF INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION
AND HOLDING OF ELECTIONS, WHAT ASSURANCE IS THERE THAT
THE US AND UK CAN MAKE IT STICK IF MUGABE OR NKOMO OR
SOMEONE ELSE WITH THE GUNS OPPOSE IT? I OBSERVED THAT
SECRET

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OUR JOINING THE BRITISH WAS DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN THE
EFFORT AND HIS CONCLUSION WAS TOO HASTY A JUDGMENT.
WE SHOULD WAIT SEE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE MEASURE
OF SUCCESS HE DESCRIBED. HE SAID, OF COURSE, HE WOULD COOPERATE
BUT HE WAS STILL DOUBTFUL THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH RESOLVE
IN THE WEST WHEN IT CAME TIME TO CRACK HEADS.

3. PM NOTED THAT SMITH'S POSITION HAS WEAKENED AND NOW
IS GOOD TIME TO LAUNCH NEW EFFORT. SMITH WAS STILL
IMPORTANT TO SOLUTION IN TERMS OF BRINGING WHITES ALONG.
THIS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND AS NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED.
BOWDLER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INDEPENDENCE, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00558
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770130-0416
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770459/aaaabyph.tel
Line Count: 67
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e12fb2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 80424, 77 STATE 80423
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2810479
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER ON OWEN MISSION
TAGS: PFOR, US, XA, (VORSTER, BALTHAZAR JOHANNES), (OWEN, DAVID)
To: STATE LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e12fb2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009